

**First Steps Commission Meeting**  
**Thursday September 26, 2019**  
**Varnum – Bridgewater Place 17<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Attendees:** Ashley Karsten, Bob Herr, Carl Ver Beek, Dr. Juan Olivarez, Julie Ridenour, Karen O'Donovan, Kate Pew Wolters, Kristina Donaldson, Michelle Van Dyke, Ron Caniff  
Staff: Annemarie Valdez, Bri Fett, Cati Cortes, Christine Timbol Larson, Heather Boswell, Shelby French

**Kate Pew Wolters called meeting to order at 8:37am**

**Handouts:**

1. Agenda
2. FSK Commission Meeting Notes 7.25.2019
3. August Financials
4. Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget
5. 2019-2020 Ready by Five Millage Budget
6. Pre-Conference Flyer

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Consent Agenda:**

**Motion to approve July 25,2019 Minutes**

- Support: Julie Ridenour
- Second: Michelle Van Dyke
- All in favor

**Finance Report:**

- The Board is comfortable with the Revenue side of the budget for the coming year.
- Millage funding coming from the Ready by 5 to support some First Steps wages.
- Kellogg has a significant amount invested in the work of First Steps Kent (FSK).
- First county in the state able to accomplish this RB5 Millage – We can become a model for others in the state on this work.
- Kellogg opens doors to other organizations for funding so, continue to build out relationships with these organizations for future funding.

- Time for us to focus on what we are doing on a state and local level with our Millage to get it right before so we can understand who we are going to be in the future at a national level.

#### **Motion to approve FSK 2019-2020 budget**

- Support: Carl Ver Beek
- Second: Dr. Juan Olivarez
- All in Favor
- \$204,000 of reimbursement for our startup cost being some of the carry-over will not get paid in 2019. What does not get paid in Millage capture in 2019 we will get paid in the coming 5 years.
- Outreach and Navigation was approved in September.
- Revenue from the county will be awarded from the Millage. Revenue coming in to match what is going out. We will only have as much money as the county gives us.
- Fix the Millage budget being that there is a typo in the year.

#### **Motion to Approve RB5 Millage Budget**

- Support: Bob Herr
- Second: Karen O'Donovan
- All in favor

#### **Audit Update**

- We have begun to work with The Rehmann Robson, LLC to manage our Audit moving forward for fiscal year 2018/2019.
- We need to continue our fundraising, increasing support locally to help us stay where we need to be.

#### **Board Strategic Planning and Board Terms:**

- New Executive Assistant on Board, Britney Fett, giving a lot of support in our board work including taking minutes and coordinating emails.
- Alex Contreras, an attorney on our board, has teamed up with a partner at Miller Johnson Michael Penny, working on revising our Bylaws.
- Michael Penny has been giving direction on the set up for the board term limits and similar details including the formation of a Finance Committee as our budget grows and we move into being the administrators of the Ready by Five millage.
- Three community members have stepped up to participate of this Finance Committee along with Bob Herr being the chair of this committee with staff representation.
- Alex got us a draft of the revised copy of the Bylaws to review with Bob Herr and will share with the Executive team at the next meeting.

- We will start working on establishing Board Terms and expirations.
- Doing some preliminary work on finding a facilitator to begin strategic planning, looking at 3 to 5 years of having stability within the organization and what we would like to do as an organization for early childhood in the community.
- Looking for suggestions on strategic planning front, and suggestions of facilitator if anyone has someone to send our way.
- Finance Committee is important in addition to give support to Bob Herr whom has been doing this from the start, gives an opportunity to community members to participate.

### **Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Update:**

- Timeline - Pre-conference on October 15 and 16, from there Resident Proposal Review Board (RPRB) orientation on November.
- RFP deadline for organizations is on November 19, RPRB allocations will be complete on December 14.
- FSK Commission to approve allocations in January (TBD)
- KCBOC will give final approval.
- Service provider contracts to begin March 1.
- How will we decide what to fund based on priority? Social finance is helping collect information on where the gaps are in the community based on what exists and what is not complete enough based on data in the community. Also, needs assessment every two years.
- Environmental health screening is also an area we are looking at to provide lead testing to households in the older neighborhoods.
- Providing play and learn groups being sure families have access to these types of programs.
- There is a tentative preliminary: shortlist of metrics for first RFP on Home Visiting and Environmental Health. Being sure we can reach families in higher risk areas.

### **Business:**

#### Pritzker Update

- Anissa Eddie, our Fellow from the Pritzker Foundation, is in Denver at a Results Based on Facilitation Training. Anissa is on the steering committee for the planning to develop a Statewide early childhood policy agenda for Michigan.
- Through the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers the state has a planning grant of \$100,000.
- The planning grant funds are being used to develop the statewide policy agenda that will be submitted to Pritzker in January to compete for the implementation grant that would be \$1.5 million over three years.
- Pritzker is interested in making changes at a systems level rather than providing funding for programs with their ultimate goal to reach one million children by 2023.

- They want to see change where it will make the biggest difference for our youngest children.
- They recently sent out an RFP Letter of Inquiry for a community innovation grant that would be \$350,000 grant over three years.
  - FSK submitted the LOI with focus on systems level work to increase access to high quality child care in Kent County. This aligns well with the focus of the Statewide policy agenda grant and the ongoing work of FSK.
  - We have sent an LOI for the Innovation grant and applications to go out in October then funding will start in April.
  - Pritzker Fellow would take the lead on implementation if we receive the Innovation Grant.
- Anissa one of 14 fellows from Pritzker and the only one selected to present to the Pritzker Board of Trustees in December.
- Visitor Donna Cohen Ross from Center of Social Policy on September 16 hosted at Varnum, discussing how we can use Medicaid differently for our youngest children.
- In the 90s, Donna lead the National effort for CHIP, (Children’s Health Insurance Plan) she is one of the national experts on Medicaid and how it can be used differently at a state level.
- Innovation grant is mirrored with the state grant in that they want us working with business and change the policy for child care. We feel excited about the fact we are finally seeing grants that match what we are doing as an organization.

### **Shared Services update**

- We received the Kellogg grant for the next three years totaling in \$750,000 for the shared services work.
- Shared Services is an important piece in early childhood that will be looking at how to support childcare providers. Something that we see not only in our state but also at a local level that we have a loss of about 30% a year of our home child care providers.
- For example, many home providers do not know a lot about business, they choose the child care profession because they love children and love the work but do not have the knowledge of the business end of the work. Shared services would provide a lot of the back-office support for the child care providers so we can build their compacity and take off some of the stress that they feel which leads them to fail.
- We would be the pilot of this model and have just hired a project manager for the shared services position.
- Shared services position starts on Monday September 30, 2019.
- Will not be a consulting business but this position will be based on models that currently exist in other communities so we can figure what will work best here in Kent Country.
- The goal with this new position is for the person to meet with those in different communities across the country to learn from some of the best evidence-based

examples, one of them being in Tennessee which is funded by Kellogg, they are probably one of the best examples for they have moved from just supporting home-based providers as well as center based, which is our goal.

- Our initial pilot will focus on home based but hope to build to help center-based as well.
- This position will eventually be moved outside FSK after the three years.

### **Data Update**

- Kara Bilkert, our Data and Outreach manager is sadly leaving us due to getting married and moving to New York.
- Almost complete with the first round of interviews for the new candidate for this position.
- What is happening with this position is we are continuing with the work that we started with the high-level community indicators to guide our work.
- Working on the RB5 to develop more specific outcomes and indicators for the six years that the budget will be available in the community and be able to move outcomes.
- Working to understand how we can link RB5 data with our friends at Kent ISD and their data team.

**Meeting Adjourned at 10:05am**

**Next Commission Meeting:  
Thursday December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 8:30-10:30am  
Varnum – Bridgewater Place, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor**